

## Book Review

*Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments.* By William P. Malm.  
Kodansha International Ltd. Tokyo. 2000. 354 pages. 5,000yen.  
Hard cover. One compact disc.

Reviewed by  
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This is a revised edition of Malm's *Japanese Music and Musical Instruments* (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959). The general structure and content arrangement of the revised edition are basically the same as the previous one even though there are a lot of minor corrections. For instance, the completion year of the great image of Buddha at the Tōdaiji is corrected from 749 to 752. The main objective of this review, however, is not going to point out all the minor corrections but significant changes and modifications.

First of all, a CD is included for the first time in this revised edition. A total of 19 music examples or excerpts are recorded in this CD. Famous pieces include "Sakaki" (*kagura* song), "Etenraku" (*gagaku* ensemble music), "Matsukaze" (*noh*), "Takasago" (*noh*), "Hifumi Hachigaeshi" (*shakuhachi* music), "Atsumori" (*satsumabiwa*), "Ōgi no Mato" (*chikuzenbiwa*), "Sakaya no dan" (*gidayūbushi*), "Tomete no Kaeru" (*kouta*), *heikebiwa* and *mōsōbiwa* chanting. Some of the pieces, such as the Nagano snow festival dance music and the folk song "Kawasaki," are live recordings. In addition, a new appendix section, with the title 'CD contents and text translations,' is also added in this new edition. Instead of the limited text translations given in the original edition, this edition provides plots, stories or backgrounds of most pieces. This is extremely useful for those who have no historical knowledge of the pieces.

Another significant modification is the inclusion of new diagrams, photographs, music scores and illustrations. The new edition has a total of 89 photographs or plates, not counting the drawings of instruments, music scores and figures of traditional Japanese notations. Among the newly added plates are pictures of the *gogenbiwa* (five-stringed lute) and photographs of the *mōsōbiwa* and *heikebiwa* performers. Apart from diagrams and photographs, many new music examples and scores are also added in the new edition. For instance, newly added scores include the opening of the song "Sakaki," drum-accompanied *noh* vocal music and the *chirashi* section of "Gorō Tokimune." Furthermore, some of the music examples in the 1959 edition are modified or improved. For example, the "Etenraku" melody in Chapter 3 is modified from a single *hichiriki* melody to a full orchestral western score transcription. New tables or illustrations, such as a diagram summarizing the *ritsu* and *ryo* theory in Buddhist music can also be found in the new edition.

One of the most useful sections of the book is the appendix. It contains detailed explanations of traditional Japanese vocal and instrumental notations (Appendix I), explanations of the music recordings in the CD (Appendix II) and recently published

audio-visual materials (Appendix III). Most of the information given in the appendix of the old version is substantially updated or modified, especially the audio-visual sections.

The 'Glossary/Index' section of Malm's book is also to be recommended. In addition to the page numbers and the appropriate Chinese characters for the Japanese terms, there are also simple and short explanations for most terms and vocabulary.

It is however a pity that the time chart on Japanese music history in the 1959 version has not been modified but cut. Although the time chart in the 1959 version is, to a certain extent, too simple and not easy to read, there is no reason to exclude it entirely, especially since the book mainly concerns general Japanese music history.

Notwithstanding the many modifications and corrections in the new edition, the basic structure and the content arrangement of the book is nearly the same as the 1959 edition. This has had the effect of preserving some weaknesses as well as some strengths. The two main weaknesses that should be pointed out are: first, different religious music, varying from ancient Buddhist to modern Christian and folk ritual music, are all discussed in the same chapter (Chapter 2). Since Buddhist music is regarded as one of the most important Japanese music repertoires, it should perhaps have been discussed in a single chapter. Readers may sometimes find it confusing that both ancient and modern religious music are discussed in the same chapter.

Secondly, while *noh* (Chapter 4) and *kabuki* (Chapter 9) each have separate chapters, there is no single chapter for *bunraku*. *Bunraku* is discussed only in the *gidayūbushi* section of the *shamisen* chapter (Chapter 8). *Noh*, *bunraku* and *kabuki* are nowadays regarded as the three main theatrical performing arts in Japan, and it is generally agreed that *bunraku* has the same importance as *noh* and *kabuki*. I am not going to comment on whether it is appropriate to include *bunraku* in the *shamisen* chapter, but the *bunraku* section in the *shamisen* chapter sounds relatively short and inadequate when compared with the *noh* and *kabuki* section.

Although some of the materials in the new edition could be further updated, it is still worth acquiring a copy of the new edition. The information given in the appendix and the music examples recorded in the CD are useful for students and readers who want to pursue further study on Japanese music.